

**PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS**

Hearing Date: May 1, 2008

Subject Matter of Proposed Regulations: To identify those health science doctoral degree programs that are considered related to physical therapy for purposes of using the term doctor or “Dr.” by licensed physical therapists who have graduated from one of the defined health related science doctoral degree programs.

(1) Section(s) Affected: Add section 1398.12

PROBLEM ADDRESSED: There are varying levels of education achieved by those licensed in the physical therapy profession since the academic levels of physical therapy education have advanced from the baccalaureate degree. Therefore, licensure cannot be assumed to be synonymous with the academic degree.

The Ph.D. doctorate in philosophy and now the DSc, doctorate in science, as well as professional doctoral degrees in medicine, dentistry, nursing, education, physical therapy, etc., are all individuals with advanced degrees and are entitled to be referred to as “Doctor”. Equally entitled, the consumer should have the freedom to choose his or her physical therapist based on academic preparation.

The legislature addressed this issue with Assembly Bill 2868, permitting those licensees who have graduated with a doctorate in physical therapy to use the term “doctor” or “Dr.” as well as those who have graduated with a doctoral degree in a physical therapy health related science. Pursuant to section 2633 of the Business and Professions Code, regulations defining a health related science must be promulgated. .

SPECIFIC PURPOSE: To define in regulation which health science doctoral degrees qualify a licensed physical therapist to use the term doctor or the prefix “Dr.”

FACTUAL BASIS: Assembly Bill 2868 (Stats. 2006, Chapter 222; Bogh) authorizes a licensed physical therapist holding a doctoral degree in physical therapy or in a related health science, once defined in regulations, to use the term “doctor” and doctoral degree abbreviations, as specified, if the requirements defined in section 2633 of the Business and Professions Code are met.

These regulations will define which physical therapy related health sciences would authorize the use of the title “Doctor” or the abbreviation “Dr” by a licensed physical therapist that holds a doctoral degree in a physical therapy health related science.

Business and Professions Code section 2650 and the American Physical Therapy Association establish the curriculum for graduates of an accredited physical therapy program. The health related sciences mandated by the Code and the APTA accreditation standards were the source for defining a health related science for the purpose of this proposed regulation.

UNDERLYING DATA: There is no underlying data.

SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT: These regulations will not have a significant adverse economic impact on businesses.

SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES OR EQUIPMENT: This regulation does not mandate the use of specific technologies or equipment.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES: No alternatives, which were considered, would either be more effective than or equally less burdensome than the proposed regulations.